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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EU](#) [CE](#) [SW](#)
SUBJECT: SWEDEN RECALLS CDA TO SRI LANKA FOR CONSULTATIONS

Classified By: Pol Couns Marc Koehler for reasons 1.4 (B) & (D).

11. (C) On April 28, Sweden recalled its Charge d'Affaires to Sri Lanka for "consultations" in response to the Sri Lankan government's denial of a visa for FM Carl Bildt. FMs Bildt, Milliband and Kouchner had decided at the April 27 GAERC to travel jointly on April 29 to Colombo for talks with the government. But, according to the MFA's South East Asian Desk, the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Sweden told MFA State Secretary Belfrage his country "welcomes a bilateral visit by Bildt in May, but it is too much work to receive three visitors at once." Sweden currently believes that Sri Lanka wants to limit foreign interference in domestic affairs and found it easier to "refuse the Swede" than the other foreign ministers. In a radio interview and on his blog today, Bildt called the denial "an irrational and unacceptable decision" that will have a significant impact on the bilateral relations.

12. (C) Comment: The recall is an unusual political demonstration of indignation by Sweden and FM Bildt. Sweden is a large aid donor to Sri Lanka and hosts a significant community of Sri Lankan refugees. In recent weeks the police allowed illegal protests by pro-Tamil Tiger groups to occur in front of the Prime Minister's Office and a major downtown intersection, which may have influenced thinking in Colombo.
SILVERMAN